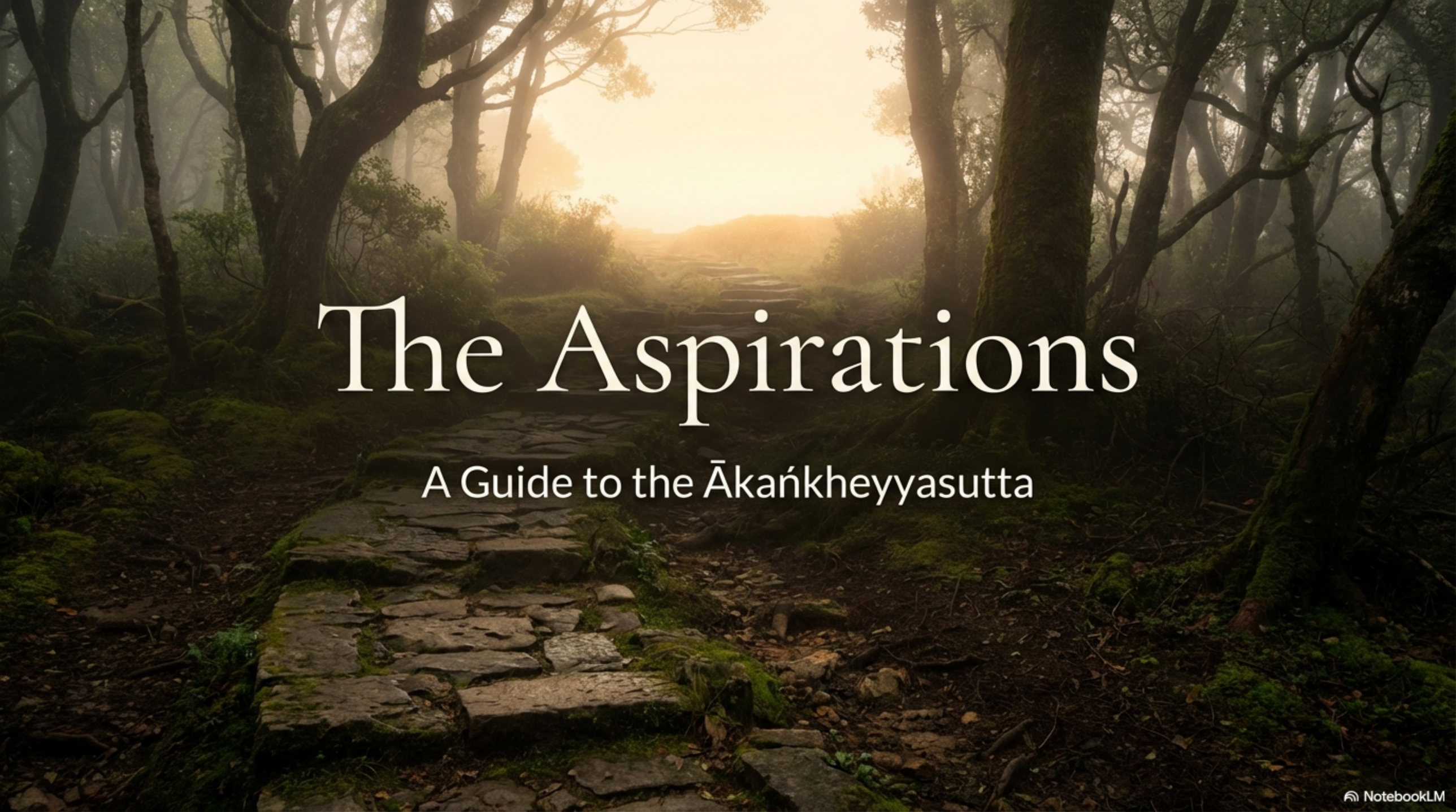
The Aspirations
A Guide to the Ākaṅkheyyasutta
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The Buddha begins with a simple, profound premise:

‘A mendicant might wish…?’

This single question unlocks a universe of human potential.

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The Answer is a Single, Unwavering Path.

Before revealing the aspirations, the Buddha provides the method—the master key to every door on the path:

‘Live by the ethical precepts and the monastic code... Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you’ve undertaken.’

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Stage I: The Foundation of Harmony

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A mendicant might wish:

- To be liked and respected by companions.
- To receive life's necessities: robes, almsfood, lodging.
- That their presence be fruitful for those who support them.
- To be a source of benefit for family, even after their passing.

The Key: 'Fulfill the precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, *not neglect absorption*, *be endowed* with discernment, and frequent empty huts.'

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A mendicant might wish:

- To prevail over desire and discontent, and not be prevailed upon by them.
- To prevail over fear and dread, and not be prevailed upon by them.

The Key: 'Fulfill the precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, not neglect absorption, be endowed with discernment, and frequent en

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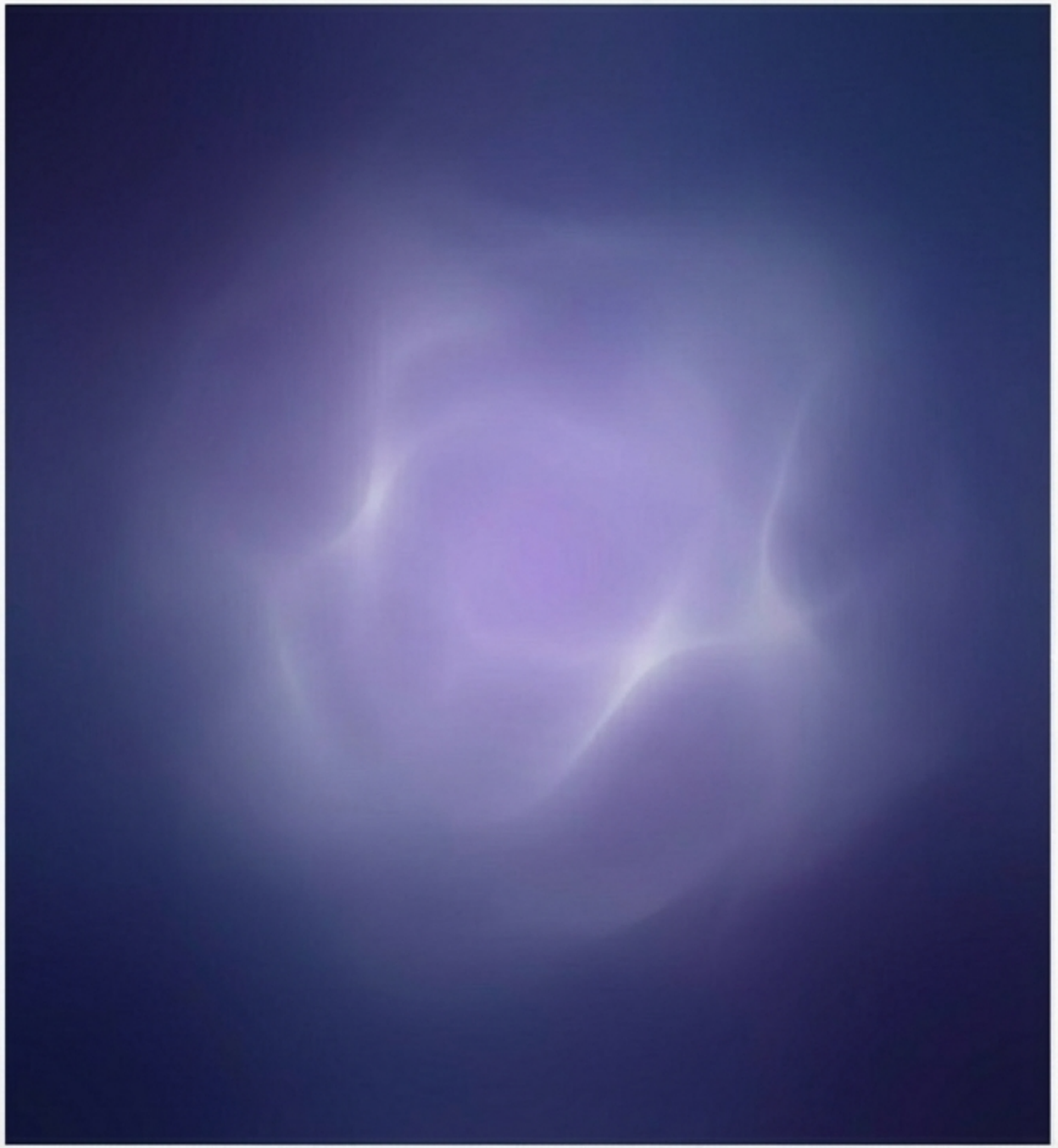
A mendicant might wish:

- To attain the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life.
- To experience the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form.

The Key: ‘Fulfill the precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, not neglect absorption, be endowed with discernment, and frequent empty huts.’



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A mendicant might wish to wield the higher knowledges:

- **Psychic Powers:** To multiply, pass through solid objects, walk on water.
- **Clairaudience:** To hear human and heavenly sounds, near and far.
- **Mind-Reading:** To understand the minds of other beings.
- **Recollection of Past Lives:** To remember countless former existences.
- **Clairvoyance:** To see beings pass away and be reborn according to their deeds.

Golden Thread: The Key: ‘Fulfill the precepts…’

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V

Stage V: The Summit of Liberation

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A mendicant might wish to systematically end all suffering:

- To become a **Stream-Enterer**, ending the first three fetters.
- To become a **Once-Returner**, weakening greed, hate, and delusion.
- To become a **Non-Returner**, ending the five lower fetters.
- To realize the **undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom** in this very life.

Golden Thread: The Key: ‘Fulfill the precepts…’

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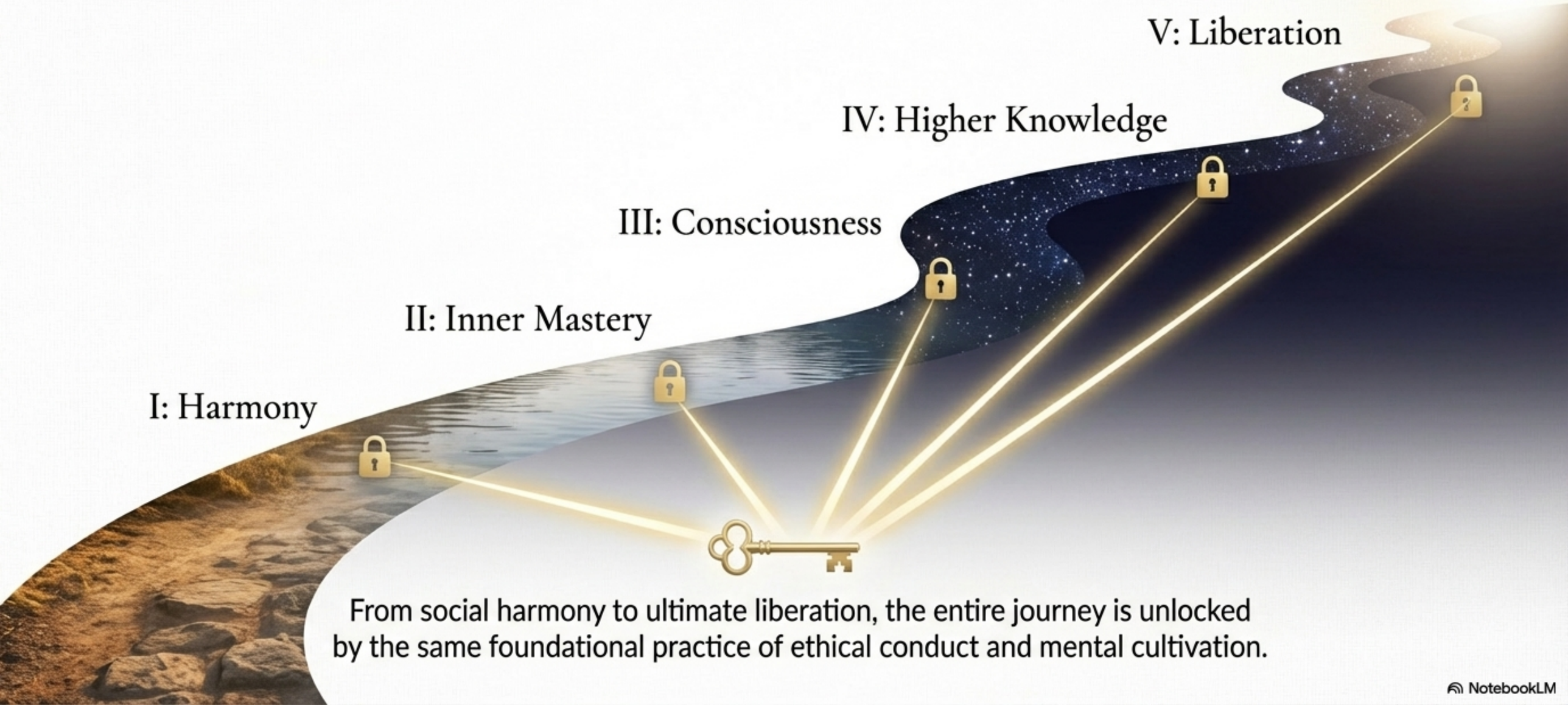
One Path. One Key. Every Aspiration.



From social harmony to ultimate liberation, the entire journey is unlocked by the same foundational practice of ethical conduct and mental cultivation.

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The Buddha's final words in the sutta are the same as his first.

The grandest aspiration begins with the discipline of the first step.

"Mendicants, live by the ethical precepts and the monastic code…' That's what I said, and this is why I said it."

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